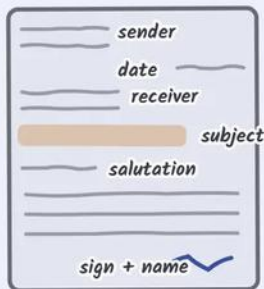


two formats only, a letter won on layout and a paragraph won on shape

Formal letter, the layout

- sender's address at the top left, then the date on the line below it
- receiver's designation and address next, left aligned
- subject line naming the purpose in one short phrase, never a whole sentence
- salutation for an unnamed authority: Sir or Madam, and Dear Sir or Madam is accepted just as readily
- body in three short paragraphs, then the complimentary close, then the signature and name
- Yours faithfully closes a letter that opened Sir or Madam, and that is the pair you will almost always need



a letter page with its zones stacked: sender, date, receiver, subject, salutation, body, sign

Tone and register

- the reader is an authority: a principal, an editor, an official, a shopkeeper, a manager
- keep it formal and courteous, firm about the problem and polite about the person
- no contractions in the body, write do not and cannot rather than the shortened forms
- no slang, no exclamation marks, and no threat, a measured letter is the one that gets acted on

Who the letter is addressed to *

- a public issue goes to The Editor, with the newspaper's name and city on the lines under it
- a school matter goes to The Principal, with the school's name and city
- a faulty product or a delayed order goes to The Manager or the customer care officer of the firm
- a civic problem goes to The Health Officer or the commissioner of the municipal corporation
- the designation goes on the first line, the institution next, the city and pin code last

The three paragraph body

- paragraph one : who you are and why you are writing, in one or two sentences
- paragraph two : the details, the facts, the dates, the exact problem or the exact request
- paragraph three : what you want done, and a line of thanks or expectation
- one purpose per letter, a complaint that also asks for information reads as two half letters

The letter types you will be set

Complaint

a faulty product or a civic problem: state it, date it, and ask for the specific remedy

Enquiry

asking for details of a course, a service or a product, list the points you need numbered

Order

placing an order: quantity, item, model, discount, mode of payment, delivery date

To the editor

raising a public issue through a newspaper, addressed to The Editor, meant for readers too